

# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT



### PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION.

In several of the states where there have been bills before the legislature for state registration, there seems to have been a most willful misrepresentation of facts in regard to the reason for and the ultimate results of state registration. It really seems incredible that reputable medical journals should take the ground that it is intended ultimately that the nurse will supplant the physician or that in any way she will infringe upon the doctor's province. Cases have been cited of gross breeches of professional etiquette on the part of the type of woman whom the great nursing body deplore and condemn, as showing the results that are to be expected. It would seem hardly necessary to state the reasons for state registration but for the fact that through misrepresentation or ignorance, its object is being misunderstood by many medical journals and medical men. We contend that the more highly cultured the woman and the better trained the nurse, the more willingly she serves the doctor, never infringing upon his province in the treatment of the patient, and using her medical knowledge independently only in cases of extreme emergency and at such time and in such manner as she knows would meet his approval. It is the woman lacking in intellect and culture and thorough training, who is guilty of the disloyalty that the whole nursing body is being accused of.

In the beginning, state registration must recognize the woman in the field. This is the way the medical, legal, and all the registration laws have had to go into effect. Eventually state registration will be a stronger safeguard than we have had hitherto in giving assurance of a certain amount of preliminary education which carries with it intelligence and a reasonable experience in technical training.

The passage which is being quoted in a number of medical journals from one of Mrs. E. G. Fenwick's papers, in which she states: "To advance the higher evolution of the trained nurse, the domination of the doctor and the man must cease when he leaves the sick room." is being largely, it seems to us willfully, misconstrued. Mrs. Fenwick's meaning is perfectly clear to nurses; in the sick room, in the treatment and control of the patient, the doctor's authority is supreme and the nurse acts always as his subordinate in carrying out such instructions as he may choose to give, but in other matters nurses must be free to act for themselves and for such measures as are for the best good of the great nursing body as a whole. We want to be emphatically understood as disclaiming all responsibility for the type of nurse who presumes to in any way usurp the province of the doctor in the treatment of the patient. It is because of her that this movement has come about among nurses to create a means of distinction between the woman who is professionally grounded and ethical, and the one who is ignorant, professionally presumptuous, and disloyal.

While on the one hand, it is rather disheartening that some medical journals are taking this attitude in regard to nursing affairs, it has been particularly gratifying during the month to see that a number of other leading ones, have expressed themselves in favor of the progressive movements among nurses.

Perhaps it is not strange that this agitation in nursing affairs should come at this time when we realize the condition of unrest which pervades every class of work, in every grade of society, the world over. It only goes to prove the tremendous importance of nurses in their professional and economic relations to the people. There would seem to be an undercurrent of jealousy of the growing importance of nurses on the part of a certain element in the medical profession. We can see no other reason for the kind of opposition which is coming more and more into the light of day. It would seem that the deeply-rooted jealousies that are existing within the ranks of the medical profession are beginning to overflow their boundaries into nursing territory.

This whole backward movement seems to be a desire on the part of certain groups of medical men, who do not represent always the best element in medicine, any more than the women they complain of represent the best element in nursing, to belittle the work of the superintendents of training-schools and to degrade the position of nurses as a whole.

IOWA.—State Registration of Graduate Nurses will become a law in Iowa, July 4th, 1907. The text of the bill as passed by the Thirty-second

General Assembly will be found among the Official Reports. It will be noted that the law differs from that secured by nurses in other states in that the Iowa nurses were not able to secure an independent board of examiners. They are under the control of the state board of health, their examining board consisting of two members of the board of medical examiners and two nurses, together with the secretary of the state board of health, who acts as secretary to the board of nurse examiners, but has nothing to do with the examinations beyond actual clerical work.

The bill as passed bears little resemblance to the bill as introduced. In the original bill the nurses asked for a board consisting of only three nurses to be appointed by the Governor from names submitted by the State Association and in this they asked for the unattainable. Twice before has their bill been practically defeated because the State of Iowa will not create any new boards, so strong is the sentiment for centralizations along all lines. Even the boards of trustees of the various educational institutions have been abolished and the schools placed under a general board of control. All matters remotely medical are placed under the board of health, and only the fact that the dentists and the pharmacists had secured their independent boards years ago, makes them exceptions to this ruling of the General Assembly.

The legislative committee canvassed the situation very thoroughly throughout the House and Senate and became convinced that an independent board of examiners could never be secured in the State of Iowa, and further than this, they were assured that they would not be allowed to withdraw their bill because of their objection to this point, but that if they failed to compromise, a law would be passed placing nursing matters entirely under the control of the board of medical examiners. After consulting with the executive committee and getting the opinions of many of the hospital and training-school superintendents over the state, it was decided that the wisest move to make would be the introduction of a substitute bill and it is this second bill, altered by sundry committee and sub-committee prunings, that was finally passed by the legislature. It contains many points that are subject to criticism, but any body of nurses that has attempted to secure legislation will appreciate the fact that "*we* do not make the law," as they were told by one of the senators when they were struggling for the retention of at least a minority of the better points of the bill in a sub-committee meeting. If the law proves unsatisfactory to the public and to the nurses of Iowa, they must trust to future legislative committees to secure amendments. At least it will have had a fair trial before the next session of the Assembly. A glance at the bill will show that the nurses have no legal voice in the selection

of those who shall represent them on this board; this is another point they could not make, but the members of the board of health have consented to select the two nurses from names submitted by the State Association. At least there have been secured for the profession state recognition and protection, a uniform examination, and a three years course of training.

The membership in the State Association is increasing and the nurses in Iowa, generally, seem interested. At the convention to be held in Ottumwa, June 4th and 5th, the subject of incorporation will come up, and the first steps will be taken toward securing it.

EXAMINATIONS IN NEW YORK.—Since the full examinations began in New York, in June of last year, the board of examiners has realized that the questions presented have been too difficult for the graduates of many of the schools. We do not concede for a moment that they are more difficult than they should be. It is simply that certain schools have not brought their pupils up to the standard and that they must be given time in which to develop more careful teaching methods. It should be borne in mind that it is not the desire or intention of the board of examiners or, more broadly speaking, of state registration, to demoralize hospitals that are conscientiously endeavoring to train their nurses along proper lines. In New York the schools are greater in number and the standards more varied than in any other state.

In the next examination, which occurs at the end of June, a somewhat different plan is to be followed from that of the two preceding examinations. Fifteen questions on each subject have been prepared, from which the applicant may select without restriction ten questions. In the past, each examiner has sent her questions directly to the education department at Albany. In the future, these questions are all to be reviewed by the members of the board in conference. This will prevent duplication, and will have a tendency to simplify the questions as a whole.

Pupils who have failed in the previous examinations should come forward again for the June examination, and may do so by filing an application in the usual form with the education department, but will not be required to again pay the fee. Schools that are registered are expected to prepare their pupils for the state examinations and to see to it that they come forward for the test. There should be a freer criticism of the questions by those who are actively engaged in teaching and who are interested in the success of our registration laws. While the number of failures in our New York examinations have seemed excessive, we are assured that they are not of greater proportion than those which

occur in other professions having examinations conducted by the education department.

The superintendents should use in their schools the text books which are given in the Education Department Bulletin, 28, for the guidance of the schools in preparing their pupils.

It must also be borne in mind that all the questions have to do with nursing and not with the practice of medicine. It is from the nursing side that the subjects are to be dealt with, for instance, the nursing care of a surgical case should be given and not the medical treatment following an operation. The examiners are not asking for technical terms or for complex and deeply scientific reasons, but are endeavoring to bring out the simple practical nursing side of every subject presented.

IN MINNESOTA, a bill for the state registration of nurses passed both houses of the legislature and was signed by the governor on April 15. Some amendments, which have not detracted greatly from its value, have made it necessary to delay the publication of the text of the bill in our pages until the June issue. The board of examiners is to be composed of four nurses and one physician, and the educational requirements are for a high school diploma and a three years hospital course.

The nurses in Minnesota are perfecting a scheme by which they will contract to take two issues of *The Courier*, a monthly magazine, the official organ of the Women's Federation of Clubs for Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. These two issues will belong to the nurses entirely and will largely consist of the reports of the two regular meetings, papers read, etc. They will have the right to publish any official news or make any announcements in the other issues.

SOUTH CAROLINA.—The graduate nurses of South Carolina are taking the first steps toward a state association and registration. A number of graduate nurses of Charleston met at Riverside Infirmary, March 1, to organize an association. A constitution and by-laws were adopted and the following officers were elected: president, Miss Marion Utes, superintendent of nurses, Roper Hospital; first vice-president, Miss Katherine C. Magrath; second vice-president, Miss Belle O'Bryan; secretary and treasurer, Miss May Hart.

MICHIGAN.—The Michigan Bill for State Registration was introduced in the House on January 22d by Representative Lord, of Detroit, and was then referred to the committee on public health.

On February 12th a substitute bill was introduced by Dr. Kelly, in

which the administration of the law was to be placed under the control of the Michigan State Medical Board. This substitute was drafted by one of the officers of the state board of medical registration, and seems to have the support of a large number of the medical men of the state. This is a disappointment to the nurses, who had felt all along that their bill was receiving the unqualified support of medical men throughout the state.

The nurses feel that the medical men have allowed their judgment to be obscured by the comments of the medical press on the registration question, and have not as yet a clear idea of what the registration of nurses really means. They do not see it from the nurses' point of view.

The outcome is uncertain, as there is every reason to believe that the nurses' bill will be unfavorably reported back from the committee on public health; yet their supporters in the legislature are still holding out hope of its becoming a law. The Michigan nurses feel that it is better to have *no* bill than one not *their own*.

COLORADO.—The first biennial report of the Colorado State Board of Nurse Examiners gives the following information: After the establishment of the board in 1905, a set of application blanks, with a copy of the law, was furnished every available nurse in the state. A notice, calling attention to the "Act Relating to Professional Nursing" and giving the name and address of the secretary of the board, was printed in the press throughout the state.

The subjects for examination are: Anatomy; physiology; hygiene; general medical nursing; surgery, including diseases of women; obstetrics (including infant feeding), or genito-urinary diseases; materia medica; and dietetics. In addition to the above the ninth subject is selected by the applicant from the following: hydrotherapy and massage, nursing of contagious diseases, care of the nervous or insane, and bacteriology.

The examinations, both theoretical and practical, were conducted and rated in accordance with civil service methods. All the nurses who have taken these examinations for registration have passed satisfactorily.

The Colorado bill has been amended, and the amendments were confirmed by the governor on April 8th. The amendments extend the term of the waiver under which nurses may be registered without examination, and seem to be for the simplification of the administration of the statute, without in any way detracting from its value. We shall give the bill as amended in a later issue.

WEST VIRGINIA.—The governor of West Virginia pronounced the bill for state registration of nurses, as passed by the two houses of legislature, as unconstitutional. It seems that in West Virginia, as in Ohio and Louisiana, only citizens who are voters can hold office under the state. The bill was returned to the legislature and so amended that the board of examiners will be composed of physicians instead of nurses.

MASSACHUSETTS.—At the meeting of the Massachusetts State Nurses Association, held at New Bedford, March 20th, it was voted to make *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* the official organ of the society.

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### JUNE REPORTS.

In the next number of the *JOURNAL* we are very anxious to wind up the official reports of societies for the season, that there may be nothing held over until fall. The July issue will be reserved for the report of the American Society of Superintendents of Training-schools for Nurses, and the August number will be used exclusively for the proceedings of the Nurses' Associated Alumnae at Richmond. It is our desire to give no space in either of these numbers to any of the usual reports or items. In order to carry out these plans we must have prompt returns from all organizations wishing to report in June, and this especially applies to the state societies that have not made their reports from month to month. All material which is to appear before fall should be in our hands by May tenth.

We take this occasion to call the attention of our contributors to the fact that the solid articles for the *JOURNAL* must always be sent to us before the first of the month preceding the date of issue; that reports of any length should be in the hands of the editor-in-chief before the twelfth of the month; and that between that date and the eighteenth we like to receive only brief reports and personals. The final copy is sent to the printer on the evening of the eighteenth of the month. It happens frequently that the most important announcements come to us after the *JOURNAL* has gone to press. Reports that might have been prepared a week, or even a month, earlier will not reach us until the number is practically made up. We have too frequently delayed the publication of the *JOURNAL* rather than postpone announcements that are of vital importance to the nursing profession. With Miss DeWitt's coming to Rochester, the editor hopes to be able to get the *JOURNAL* out more promptly and with fewer errors. She wants to say, however, to the great

body of women who are interested in the JOURNAL's welfare, that year by year as it has grown and developed she has taken up the increasing burden of the detail work and has carried it practically alone until the present time. This work has outgrown the capacity of any one person to handle. For this reason there have been omissions and errors, perhaps unimportant, but humiliating to those responsible for the magazine's appearance in the journalistic world.

The great value of our own JOURNAL lies in its providing a medium for the exchange and expression of opinions between nurses and a record of the progress of nursing. While the literary side is, in a measure, secondary, we have been proud of the development of that feature and shall continue to give careful attention to it.

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#### THE DUTY OF THE REGISTERED NURSE.

There have been many nurses registered in the state of New York who are not members of the State Association or of any nursing organization. These women should identify themselves either with a local association which is affiliated with a state society or should, in case there is no local association, join individually the New York State Nurses' Association, making application to the secretary, Miss Frida Hartmann, 82 East Eighty-first Street, New York City.

Every man and woman who is now enrolled as a registered nurse in the state of New York, and in all states where registration is enforced, should lend the force of their membership and influence in sustaining and developing state registration. This can only be accomplished by membership in the state societies and it is an obligation which registration confers upon the individual.

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#### NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS.

We propose to publish, as rapidly as material can be obtained, sketches of nursing work in mission stations. We should be glad to receive for this purpose, from all nursing schools, the names and addresses of their representatives in foreign lands, and if the missionary nurses who take the JOURNAL will send accounts of their work without waiting for a direct request, the delay in obtaining such information will be lessened by several months.

For many years there was no demand for nurses on the foreign mission field, as the station funds did not permit such luxuries. The woman physician who was at the head of a hospital had to do the nursing,

aided by native women. Many of these doctors had had a course in nursing before studying medicine and so were well equipped for such double duty. But as the appreciation of the services of the foreign doctor's work increased among the natives, the demands on his (or her) time have become greater. A better source of income for medical missions is being obtained both at home and abroad and foreign hospitals are better equipped. With these increased demands and better equipment the trained nurse has become a necessity and there are now representatives of our profession scattered all over the globe. These nurses as a rule start training-schools among the native women as soon as such action is practicable or possible.

Doctor Eleanor Chesnut, who lost her life as a martyr at the far inland station of Lien Chow, in China, had been training native women as doctors and she was encouraged to start a class in nursing also. At the time of her death she had two student nurses, one of whom was so ignorant that she could not read, and was learning the Chinese characters from the labels on the jars in the dispensary. In spite of such odds, Doctor Chesnut was translating Mrs. Robb's text book on nursing into Chinese for her students' use. We have not heard whether this work is yet completed, though a woman physician in Canton intended to go on with it.

There is, we believe, a well-established training-school for nurses in Canton in connection with the woman's hospital and medical school. Such work must be extremely interesting from a scientific and humanitarian point of view as well as from the religious standpoint. The details of the nursing of such patients, the way in which our methods must be modified to suit other peoples, and the new expedients suggested by necessity will be of greater value to the JOURNAL and to its missionary readers than mere statistics of such schools.

The requests for broader knowledge of this work have become demands during the past year and we shall not be content with anything less than a thorough survey of the whole field. For this we shall need the coöperation of our missionary nurses.

We begin this series with a sketch of the Mary Taber Shell Memorial Hospital in India.

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#### THE SUPERINTENDENTS' MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA

It seems hardly possible that it can be thirteen years since the organization of the American Society of Superintendents of Training-schools in Chicago, and yet when we consider conditions as they were at

that time, and the progress that has been made mainly through the leadership of that society, the time is short for the accomplishment of so much. At that time the members of the teaching body were strangers to each other; today there is hardly a woman who counts for much who is not enrolled in this society and who is not known both as a woman and also by her work to all of the other members. It is through this annual conference that the idea of uniformity in teaching methods and state registration have been developed. At these conferences every advanced step has been first presented and every problem of the training-school discussed. No woman entitled to membership, who is a teacher of nurses can afford to remain outside, or should miss attending this thirteenth convention who can possibly be present—for never has there been a time when the teaching body more needed the wisdom of many minds than at the present.

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#### THE MEETING AT RICHMOND.

The programme for the meetings of the Associated Alumnae at Richmond will be found among the official reports and it promises a most enjoyable and interesting treat for the nurses able to attend. The papers and discussion on state work, conducted by Miss Sly, will be of great importance to workers in state associations. The question box, in charge of Miss McIsaac, will doubtless bring out much of the practical side of nursing. Among the papers to be read is one on Alms-house Nursing, a new and important subject, which will be presented by the Reverend Caroline Bartlett Crane, whom the Michigan nurses have secured to present the subject to us.

The all-day excursion to Norfolk at the close of the days devoted to the regular work of the convention will be a restful and delightful conclusion to the gathering.

The Jamestown Exposition will prove an attraction to many at this time, and careful heed should be given to the instructions in regard to tickets, time limits, stop-overs, etc., that none be disappointed.

To women living in the eastern states, the boats running from Boston and New York to Norfolk offer a means of transportation combined with a delightful outing. The trip from Boston occupies nearly two days and nights, the steamer being out of sight of land for a day. To be in the midst of real sea breezes for so long a time, both before and after the rather strenuous days of our annual gathering, should offer a temptation to many to choose this mode of travel. The trip by land, though it may not be as restful, will lead through beautiful country in the garb of spring.

One of the very interesting features of this Richmond meeting is that the nurses are to be entertained by the nurses of the Old Dominion and not by those of Richmond alone. All the nurses of the different towns and cities throughout Virginia are contributing toward the entertainment, each regretting that her particular city is not to be the headquarters. Richmond being the largest city with the largest membership, takes the lead, but Norfolk is a close second and throughout the State the coöperation is most cordial and enthusiastic. This changes the character of the entertainment a little, and for the first time the national organization is to receive the hospitality of a whole state. In the department of Letters to the Editor will be found a communication from a group of nurses who offer special attention to the visiting members.

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#### CORRECTIONS

Our April number contains a number of errors which we have been asked to explain and correct.

In Sister Amy's article on Artificial Feeding of Infants, page 525. the last paragraph should read, at the beginning: "The bottle must be held during the entire feeding." At the end of the same paragraph, read: "Bottles are washed in soap and water, nipples in running cold water, turned inside out, and boiled p. r. n."

In Dr. Goffe's paper on The Woman's Hospital, page 515. under Requirements for Admission, the paragraph reading, "A course of lectures is given by the principal of the training-school and her head nurses," should read, "A course of lectures is given by the attending physicians and surgeons, and classes and demonstrations are conducted by the principal of the training-school and her head nurses."

In Editorial Comment, page 509, under the heading The Shortage in Probationers, in the first line of the last paragraph, "with the return to the three years" should read "with the return to the two years."

These errors were all in the original manuscripts and the JOURNAL office was responsible only for the last.